

LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of Labour Unity

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Editor : R. Palme Dutt

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PATIENT TEACHER



HISTORY is the most patient of teachers; but she keeps a rod for those who do not heed her. When Latin American countries, fired with the principles of the French Revolution and their neighbours' War of Independence, threw off the yoke of Spain, the young U.S.A. was the first Power to recognise them. And when the Bourbons planned an invasion to win back their former Empire, President Monroe gave them check. He declared that the Americas were no longer a field for European colonisation, and that an attempt to control the destiny of any American community would be an act 'of an unfriendly disposition toward the U.S.' At that time the peoples of the former colonies of Spain and of Britain alike could applaud the Monroe Doctrine, as a guard against counter-revolutionary tyrants. But that was 130 years ago. Today they see the Monroe Doctrine invoked by the tyrant to exclude the United Nations from hearing the complaint of an outraged small nation. 'Keep out of our hemisphere!' bawls the Yankee namesake of the discoverer of North America. The lesson history has yet to teach the 'new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal', who fought King George III for their independence, is that no people can win freedom who deny it to others. (If only every British housewife realised how much it costs her in rising prices to keep troops in Kenya, Malaya, Egypt, Cyprus, the Carriibbean, she

would support the colonial struggles for freedom and fight for her own.)

The day Guatemala was invaded, June 18, the Foreign Minister airmailed to us the article which appears on page 357. Today Guillermo Toriello shares a precarious sanctuary afforded by the Mexican Embassy in Guatemala City with 500 other refugees; others have been massacred. His message has already become an eloquent voice from the past. Yet one more lesson history has to teach us; freedom cannot be silenced. A Latin American reader in London points out 'how the Americans have defeated themselves by showing my disillusioned friends in South America who is the real tyrant'. He explains that, having already won ten new readers this year, he intends 'to continue to do good to myself and my people of British Guiana, and all South America, by getting more still. This is how to change the outlook of the British, so that they can release themselves from American bondage too'. He claims that specimen copies did '90 per cent. of the work for me'.

He Knows the Road

AMONG others who do the same is a West Country railwayman, Labour Party member and trade union branch secretary. He explains to those he meets on the job and in the movement that '*it is one of the finest labour magazines in the country. I have been reading it for several years and find it a valuable asset in analysing up-to-date political trends.*' He

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Notes of the Month

War or Peace?

R. PAGE ARNOT*

The First World War was a culmination of years of intense bitter rivalry among a number of daring and desperate Powers seeking territory, trade advantage, raw materials, control of trade routes, and political, economic or military domination of small and helpless peoples.

(THE MEMOIRS OF CORDELL HULL, Secretary of
the U.S.A. State Department 1932-1944.)

FORTY years ago this month, August, 1914, saw the outbreak of war between the great Powers. Beginning as 'the European war', it spread throughout the globe. It was called 'the war to end war': for there would never again be another: and it would be the last of all wars. Today, when its official title is 'the first world

*The Editor will resume the Notes of the Month in the next issue.

war', these pathetic illusions of the past may be recalled as a lesson, and a warning of the urgent need to smash the forces that openly speak of a third world war and are driving towards it. The war that began forty years ago was the outcome of rivalry of empires, of the tensions of capitalism in its monopoly stage that Marx had predicted half a century before. It was a war for plunder, for re-division of the colonies of the imperialist powers. It was presented as a war for the rule of law, for the freedom of nationalities, and for other similar pretences calculated to win the support of the masses. At the time it was mercilessly exposed by Lenin and by the small minority that remained true to the doctrine of socialism, opposed to imperialist wars. Thirty years later it was possible for Roosevelt's Secretary of State Cordell Hull to admit the truth of Lenin's exposure, thereby condemning not only his own predecessor in President Woodrow Wilson's administration of 1916 onwards but condemning in advance his own successor in Eisenhower's administration. For today, ten years later, these words apply with ten-fold force to a capitalist world dominated by United States imperialism and to its policy as set forth by his successor John Foster Dulles.

The End of an Epoch

The sombre memory of that disaster of 1914 which was to cost thirty-three million human lives, of the second world war whose total cost is yet unknown, or the foreboding of the further disaster that the capitalist rulers (with immeasurably greater powers of destruction than ever before) have been preparing for nearly a decade, are not the only emotions aroused by this fortieth anniversary. There are deeper considerations which must be present to every reflecting mind. August, 1914, was the sign of the ending of an epoch. The glories of a century of capitalism, which vaunted itself above all previous modes of production, were ending in devastation and bloodshed beyond parallel. The clash of empires built up on the exploitation of subject classes at home and subject peoples abroad brought about a crisis which was to sound the knell of all empires. The struggle of classes, the liberation movement of peoples, each seemingly submerged and swept away by the torrent of jingoism in August, 1914, arose more powerfully than ever before, threatened every imperialist rule and reached climax in the tsarist empire. There the Russian Revolution of 1917 ended the rule of landlords and capitalists, freed the subject nationalities, set up the first workers' republic and ended the exploitation of man by man.

The Mills Are Grinding

The disaster of August, 1914, led to the general crisis of capitalism, with one-sixth of the globe torn away from the grasp of landlord and capitalist. Ever since then, in a new epoch of wars and revolutions, the mills of that general crisis have been grinding. All the efforts of the capitalist ruling classes, through reaction, repression, race-hatred, intensified exploitation and wars of aggression have been powerless to prevent the rising of oppressed classes and the liberation of colonial peoples. Within less than forty years of general crisis the corrupt and rotten ruling classes have been driven out in a dozen countries, so that already over one-third of the human race are outside the arena of imperialist exploitation.

Wars Against Socialism

Ever since the 1914-18 war, in all the attempts made to stifle the new world coming to birth, first one group and then another of the capitalist powers have taken the lead in aggression. Even during the 1914-18 war Britain and France began armed intervention on Soviet Russia, and hounded on the armies of a dozen other powers in what Churchill, still proud of the felony, has described as the attempt 'to strangle Bolshevism at birth'. After the world economic crisis of 1929-33 the fascist powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) came to the fore with their plans (connived at by the Tory Government) for aggressive war upon the U.S.S.R. But the fascists were out for easier conquests first and it was not until they had a dozen countries of Europe in their grasp, controlling their resources, that they launched their aggression on the land of the Soviets. No sooner had the fascist powers been defeated by the alliance of Britain, the United States and the U.S.S.R., together with the resistance movements in the occupied countries, than talk went about that 'the next war is against Russia'. By March, 1947, with the proclamation of the Truman doctrine, the United States had come to the fore to head the capitalist drive against the U.S.S.R. and 'against communism' in any country.

U.S. Imperialism—and China

Forty years ago the U.S.A., however great in population and production, and however much its big trusts were a portent for the future, was still a debtor country, and had only a little while earlier been admitted to the conferences of the great powers. The U.S.A. emerged from the 1914-18 war with all the allies in her debt, and

with her navy equal in size to the British navy. The U.S.A. emerged from the last war ahead of all other capitalist countries economically, financially and militarily, ready to assert its dominant position and to lead the old world of capitalism against the new world of the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies. But the net of encirclement to be cast around the U.S.S.R. by air bases on the territories of vassal empires and puppet states was ripped asunder in 1949. The overwhelming defeat of the puppet Chiang Kai-shek by the People's Liberation Army of China not only spoiled the U.S. plans against the U.S.S.R. but brought a quarter of mankind on to the path of peaceful advance towards socialism. Where Wall Street had hoped for a vast arena of monopoly exploitation, they suffered humiliating reverse. A second stage in the general crisis of capitalism, developing in the period of the second world war, was signalled in the withdrawal of China from the arena of capitalist exploitation. The setting up in 1949, after more than a century of heroic struggle, of the People's Republic of China ('a people's democratic state, led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants') ended a long history of oppression and enslavement. 'China,' said Mao Tse-Tung, 'has stood up'. This reinforcement to the noble cause of peace brought by a quarter of the population of the globe was at the same time the most severe setback to the U.S. war plans for world dominion.

Armaments and Wars

Since 1949 the armaments of the U.S.A. and, at her bidding, of her satellites, have been doubled and trebled. Feverish activity began to produce the hydrogen bomb. The drive to arm West Germany, at whatever ultimate cost to Britain and France, began in 1950. Japan, soon also to be rearmed, was made a base for the attack on the people of Korea, itself to be made the jumping-off ground for the invasion of China. The resistance of the Korean people together with the Chinese volunteers who went to meet open threat of aggression to their country's frontiers compelled a cease-fire by the summer of 1953. But long before the cease-fire in Korea the U.S.A. had seen another potential base in Vietnam and was sustaining with its supplies the French imperialists in their attempt to crush the peoples of Indo-China.

The Forces of Peace

But equally in these last five years since 1949 the forces of peace have been awakened to the danger of a third world war and of its

atomic weapons. The petition to ban atomic weapons was signed by hundreds of millions, the majority of whom came from the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies. But within capitalist empires the voices for peace made themselves heard in steadily growing numbers. The world in these last five years has been visibly divided into two camps; the camp of imperialism and war; and the camp of democracy and peace. And, besides the one-third of mankind that is liberated there are numbered in the camp of democracy and peace many millions of men and women, with every sort of political or religious outlook, in the U.S.A., the British Empire and the other capitalist countries. It is this insistent pressure for peace that compelled the Berlin meeting of the four foreign secretaries in February and the calling of the Geneva Conference to deal with the future of Korea and to bring about peace in Indo-China.

Geneva

The conference of the five great Powers at Geneva raised hopes of peace. But it also aroused alarm in the war camp: and counter-preparations for an armed alliance of imperialist powers in South-East Asia were set afoot by Dulles before the conference began. Jawaharlal Nehru whose meeting in the last week of June with Chou En-lai resulted in the laying down of five principles of the relations between countries (mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty: non-aggression: non-interference in internal affairs: equality and mutual benefit: peaceful co-existence) emphasised—in a speech at Allahabad on July 11—how great a risk of world war was run by the Dulles move:—

The world had come very near the brink of such a catastrophe, just about the time the Geneva Conference began. . . . America was about to intervene in the Indo-China conflict. . . . American ships had nearly reached Indo-China waters and it was a real hair-breadth escape for the world that nothing had happened to enlarge Indo-China's war.

(India News, July 17, 1954.)

Baffled in this, the United States stood demonstratively aloof from the active efforts to bring about peace and then withdrew their main representatives, boycotting Geneva and leaving only a subordinate there with an obstructive brief. In spite of this attitude, progress was made at Geneva, which in turn brought repeated efforts from the United States to impede a final settlement. Of these the latest in mid-July was the sudden visit of Dulles, not to Geneva, but to Paris whither Eden and Mendès-France, abandoning the confer-

ence, must immediately fly, there to learn the latest conditions laid down by the transatlantic overlords, there to supplicate the actual presence at Geneva of Dulles or his assistant Bedell Smith. When their request was at length granted and Bedell Smith returned to Geneva, 'informed men in the Senate', according to a Washington correspondent, interpreted the decision as indicating that

the United States was returning to the parley in strength only after it had become convinced that its basic wishes were going to be met by France and Britain.

(*Manchester Guardian*, July 16, 1954.)

The matter could hardly be put more plainly. The Paris visit of Dulles was intended to put a spoke in the wheels at Geneva. Immediately on the return of the imperialist delegates to the conference, a more unyielding attitude was shown by them. Within three days of the date set by Mendès-France, peace once more hangs in the balance.

Rearming Germany

Meantime, whatever else Churchill and Eden brought back from their parley they had sought with Eisenhower and Dulles in Washington, on one thing, the most momentous and sinister issue, they were in full accord. That is the rearming of Western Germany either by its inclusion in the European Defence Community or alternatively by its being given an accession of sovereign powers, from which rearmament would follow. The resistance of the French Republic which till now has refused to ratify the European Defence Community Treaty (entailing the rearmament of West Germany) is to be overcome or be by-passed—with August as the date. The threat to coerce France into acceptance of the E.D.C., made more than once from the United States since the beginning of this year is now once more repeated by Churchill, who took the occasion to make fulsome references to Adenauer and to his regime under which the whole apparatus of German militarism is now looming ahead, with its Krupps and other monopoly firms in control, with its repression of democratic opinion and its resurrection of the Nazi generals. This Anglo-American drive for the rearming of West Germany is the most serious danger in the present world situation. For if once the Nazis are rearmed, the task of preventing war is rendered far more difficult, and will require redoubled efforts from all the forces of peace.

The Upsurge in the Labour Movement

Five months ago, when it was announced that, in defiance of the Margate Conference decisions but in accord with the policy of the Foreign Office, Messrs. Attlee and Morrison had persuaded just over half the Labour members of Parliament to accept the rearmament of West Germany, there was an immediate revulsion of feeling within the Labour movement. In one constituency Labour Party after another meetings were called and resolutions were passed condemning the leadership, and demanding a special conference. Week by week the anger and indignation mounted higher, notably in the big industrial centres that have been the electoral stronghold of the Labour Party. From one city there came the poignant utterance:

No single political event in the last few years has stirred the members of the Coventry Labour Party so much as the decision to rearm Germany. It was from Coventry that this statement came: Coventry, where memories of death and devastation cannot be blotted out by a parliamentarians' vote, where the futility of the Home Office 'Civil Defence' has been strikingly exposed, where there is conviction that the only defence against total destruction is to prevent the use of the hydrogen bomb—and for this purpose to end a policy which by rearming the Nazis would lead straight to atomic war.

Easter—and Whitsuntide

The immediate angry response of these many scores of constituency Labour Parties was reinforced by similar resolutions of protest from trades councils, divisional and district committees as well as branches of trade unions. Unions that met in annual conference at Easter rejected the rearming of West Germany. The Co-operative Party Conference assembling at Easter, found its national leadership already tied up in support of Messrs. Attlee and Morrison and unhesitatingly turned down its national committee and voted by 5,092,000 votes to 2,410,000 against rearming of West Germany. This was too startling a reversal to be ignored by the capitalist newspapers, which had clamped down with a 'press silence' upon the vast popular movement of feeling amongst the Labour Parties. After a sour comment on the Co-operative Conference decision *The Times* comforted the Tories and the right-wing leaders by a reference to the forthcoming Whitsuntide Co-operative Union Congress which, it was assured, would bring a different result. Whitsuntide came. The Co-operative Union Congress, representing over 11,000,000 members (with their families approximating to a majority of the population of Great Britain) decided against German rearmament.

The Counter-moves

How, in the face of such an unmistakably clear and overwhelming expression of opinion, could Messrs. Attlee, Morrison, Gaitskell and other right-wing leaders continue in their course? How could they, after Easter had made it clear that the whole Labour movement was seething with indignation, coolly insist on their majority in the Labour Party Executive adopting their new policy—though not as yet daring to gag the substantial minority? What power had been lent them to enable them to flout the unparalleled revolt of opinion and feeling in the Labour movement? The answer is only too clear. Behind the leader of the Labour Party, behind its deputy-leader and their favoured candidate for treasurer, is the whole power and influence of capitalist Britain, thrown in the scales against the membership of the trade unions, the co-operatives and the local organisations. The imperialist slogan ‘continuity of foreign policy’ which the wretched Ramsay MacDonald was the first to adopt as Labour Premier, has meant a Tory-Labour coalition on the major questions of foreign policy, including the issues of peace or war. By this foreign policy coalition they are tied: and, equally, by this they are supported. They have the backing of the Foreign Office, of *The Times*, *Telegraph*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express* and all the millionaire capitalist press. They have the backing of the high-placed generals and air marshals, they have the whole weight of Her Majesty’s Government thrown in the scale. All these are bent on rearming West Germany—and behind these again are the governments in the camp of capitalism and war, including the Adenauer cabinet in Bonn (but not the German Social-Democrats, brother-party to the Labour Party) and a whole range of administrations from Washington to Tokyo. With all this behind them Messrs. Attlee, Morrison and Gaitskell could safely flout the votes in the constituencies, and plan all their counter-moves. They could rely upon the British Broadcasting Corporation to stage their propaganda on rearming West Germany; and could launch their Gaitskell-led and other regional conferences (conferences without a voting test) to explain why the right-wing leaders of the Labour Party were against the policy of the Labour Party.

The Block Vote

But the main expedient of Messrs. Attlee, Morrison and Gaitskell has been to refuse any special conference and to rely at the approaching Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Annual Con-

ference in September upon the block votes of a handful of very big unions, in order to swamp the votes of the Labour Party membership. In several cases these votes are wielded by general secretaries of unions where no ballot of the members or delegate conference has been held. In other cases the block vote conceals large minorities within the unions. Here indeed there is the most startling contrast. In the few cases where a vote of one of these bigger unions has been taken and has recorded a majority in favour of rearmament, there have been substantial minorities. In the many union conferences, covering over two-and-a-half million members, where the vote has gone against German rearmament, the delegates have been practically unanimous. Thus for example the spring Conference of U.S.D.A.W. (Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers) showed two out of over 850 delegates supporting the right wing. Or again in the July conferences, the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen found only two votes were cast against the Union's protest while at the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers Conference the vote against rearmament was nearly four to one (46 to 12). If all the votes already recorded throughout the union conferences, against rearming West Germany, were added up, and if similarly all the votes for supporting the Attlee-Morrison policy of rearmament were added up, there can be little question as to the result: an overwhelming majority against rearming West Germany.

Put the Issues Squarely

A still more serious question of democratic method arises in those cases where no proper vote has been taken to ascertain the opinion of trade union members or where a blanket endorsement of Labour Party policy is held to cover precisely this disputed question of rearming West Germany. Where the issues are not put squarely (or, as in some cases, are not put at all) no one will respect the result as a true verdict. For example, let the miners of Britain have the question put to them squarely: 'Are you in favour of rearming West Germany as part of the U.S. drive for war upon the Soviet Union? For or Against?' For this is the real issue. Could there be any doubt of how then they would vote? For then it would have been a clear choice between solidarity with their brother trade-unionists in the U.S.S.R. on the one hand and on the other submission to the war plans of monopoly capitalism. In 1926, when the miners, abandoned by the right-wing leaders of the T.U.C., had to struggle

on alone in a grim seven months' lockout and needed the utmost help, the Soviet miners and other Soviet trade unionists contributed more than all the rest put together. Mindful of this, the union leaders have repeatedly emphasised the uncommonly strong link between the miners of Britain and of Soviet Russia. Is it credible the British miners would wittingly put weapons in the hands of the Nazis to slaughter the Soviet coal miners? It cannot be believed: and any claim to the contrary must be regarded as spurious. In addition it must rouse in the minds of trade unionists the need for re-examination of voting procedure in order to ensure the full use of proper democratic methods.

A Clear Choice

Equally spurious is the right-wing argument of 'no alternative' put in the Attlee broadcast of June 26. The damning phrase 'no alternative' has been the excuse for almost every blunder or crime that blots the pages of history. '*Kann nicht anders*—we have no alternative'—the words on the lips of the statesmen of Europe in August, 1914. There are always alternatives. Sometimes, for those who have gone down the wrong road, the alternative may be to retrace their steps. But in this case there is a clear alternative. Instead of the European Defence Community (for 'European', read 'six countries of Europe') or of any other scheme for rearming the Nazis, there is the alternative of bringing all countries of Europe into a common arrangement to keep the peace. In February Foreign Minister Molotov put forward at the Berlin Conference the offer of a general European Treaty on Collective Security. That offer still stands. The choice is clear. For to plunge into rearming the Nazis would once again cast the shadow of war upon the destinies of Britain. The realisation of this, heightened on this fortieth anniversary of August, 1914, which sent a generation to the slaughter house, should nerve every man and woman, in every organisation of the working class and of the British people to strive to their utmost for the securing of world peace.

July 19, 1954.

ARE WAGES HIGH ENOUGH?

JIM GARDNER

TRADE Union annual conferences during recent months have had wages under review and in most cases have decided on new claims. Another round of wage negotiations is likely to follow in an endeavour to achieve some real improvement in living standards. In the nine years since the end of the second world war a series of increases has brought about a substantial rise in the nominal or money wage of workers in all industries. On the other hand, real wages (*i.e.*, the purchasing power of wages) have decreased. This fall has been more in the highly skilled than in the lower rated categories—where some have had a slight rise.

Ministry of Labour indices of average weekly earnings are frequently quoted, particularly by employers in the course of wage negotiations, in an attempt to disprove the facts of declining real wages. The latest published figures (for the last week in October, 1953) show the average weekly earnings for men 21 years of age and over in all industries at £9 9s. 2d. with average hours worked 47.9. For the manufacturing industries average earnings are £9 16s. 7d. and average hours worked 47.9; for engineering, average earnings are £9 18s. 7d. and average hours 48.2. These averages being for adult male workers, are much higher than the averages for all workers which include women and young people. Average earnings, moreover, include piecework and all other forms of output bonus earnings, merit and other additional lieu rates and overtime premium payments; while from every pay packet there are deductions for social insurance and other purposes. The augmented earnings are very unevenly distributed, and the general effect is partially to conceal the actual decline in real wages since the war. The official index of weekly Rates of Wages shows an increase from 100 as at June, 1947, to 140 at May, 1954, two points behind the retail prices index of 142 compared with 100 at June, 1947; but this takes no account of the decline in real wages at the initial date compared with pre-war. Despite all the negotiated increases the total result of post-war price and wage movements is that living standards have not improved, but have actually declined.

Trade Union negotiations on working-class standards have, of course, been concerned with other matters besides wages. There has been a reduction in the hours of the standard working week,

accompanied in some industries (as in engineering) by the shortening of the working week from five-and-a-half to five days—but also including an undesirable extension of the working day. Holidays with pay have been established or extended and workers in most industries now have two weeks' summer holiday with some kind of payment besides statutory holidays with pay. These are positive achievements and, despite decided limitations, are an advance in working conditions. Unfortunately, the official shortening of the working week loses some of its significance by the fact that earnings quoted above are inclusive of overtime. In engineering with a 44-hour week, the average hours worked are just over 48; but it cannot be assumed that the average overtime hours (*i.e.*, hours paid at overtime rates) are limited to the number of hours worked over 44. To assess the effect of overtime on average earnings would need information about average ordinary hours worked, and this is unobtainable. Allowing for all time lost for varying causes, that would reduce the number of hours worked at ordinary rates, the average number of hours worked at overtime rates must be quite substantial and have an equally substantial effect on average earnings. These inflated earnings are used in argument to try and disprove the case for a wage increase, whereas the real effect is to destroy the achievement of the shorter working week since it happens that these overtime earnings are included in current assessment of living standards.

Paid holidays also lose some of their value by the method and amount of holiday payments. In engineering, payment for the two weeks' summer holiday is in the form of credits (actually deferred wages) equal to one twenty-fifth of the standard rate for each week's work, not including overtime, during the period of fifty weeks since the previous summer holidays. No credits are given for lost time and short time means short credits and short holiday pay. Consideration within defined limits is given for time lost through sickness. This means that a very large proportion of workers do not get even the minimum standard rate for the two weeks' summer holiday period. To most of them it merely adds up to a couple of weeks with short, sometimes very short, pay packets. Even in the case of statutory holidays, a stipulated number of hours ($8\frac{1}{2}$ hours in engineering) is paid, very often a half hour short on the day's wage. By far the majority of workers do not even get the standard rate for holidays and holiday wages are decidedly less than the average earnings of the Ministry of Labour Index.

The Ministry of Labour Retail Prices Index has very little to commend in it. Some attempt has been made to adjust the

weighting of this index to the changing values and social needs of the post-war period. But even as adjusted it has very little relationship to the spending habits of the average working-class family. Weighting food at two-fifths of the average wage or of less than the average wage does little more than provide a minimum diet of very poor quality for a family of five, yet this 'on the average' means that very many families have to live on a great deal less. A 'human needs' diet, based on lowest prices of what are described as 'human needs' food, as worked out by Miss T. Schulz in the Bulletin of the Oxford University of Statistics, cost £2 16s. 8½d. for five people. It would need an income of £7 1s. 10d. on the basis of the cost of living index weights to sustain a family of five on this diet. The fitter's standard rate of £7 4s. 10d. is only 3s. above a minimum needs income for a family of man, wife and three children. A foundry labourer with the same size of family on a standard rate of £6 7s. 8d. needs an increase of 14s. 2d. to come up to the minimum needs income of Miss Schulz, and the standard rate of the labourer in engineering is even less by about 3s. per week. The labourer has less opportunity of piecework or other systems of payment by results and is dependent more on overtime to augment his earnings. It will be readily appreciated, therefore, that the shorter working week has no meaning to these workers.

'Freedom Day', so called when rationing came to an end, also had a very different meaning to working people who found that rationing by the purse could be even more harsh than rationing by the book. Price increases, after rationing came to an end, knocked spots off Miss Schulz's minimum diet and made it necessary for many workers to work more overtime in order to maintain a mere sustenance diet for themselves and their families.

Rent, weighted in the index at about one-fourteenth of the weekly wage, has no real application to the majority of workers on or below average earnings. For many of them rent takes a great deal more than one-fourteenth of the weekly wage. The new Rent Act has decreed that there is to be an increase, the equivalent of a wage cut, which will distort the index still more and give greater urgency to wage demands. To workers living in the new housing estates, fares have become a nightmare problem for which the index makes very inadequate provision. Thus each item of the index could be examined in relation to either wages or average earnings; but it would all add up to the same conclusion that, as everyone knows, living standards, far from being maintained, have in fact declined.

Family allowances and social insurance benefits bring some relief to many a hard-pressed working-class mother, as do school meals when obtainable. But it was never intended that these social services should be used to fill the gap between wages and rising prices. In any case, social insurance benefits are paid for by deduction from wages. Even so, there is a decided drop in the standard of benefits in relation to prices so that the aged, the sick and the unemployed can only be sustained by supplementary payments from public funds or from family or other private sources.

Actual distress from lower real wages is not so obvious, due to the relatively small margin of unemployment. A whole generation of young people have had no personal experience of mass unemployment. In most families there has been regular employment and an income of some kind during the last fourteen years. There are other uncertainties of the post-war years: but dread of the dole has faded into the background and there is not the same feeling of insecurity of employment which cast so grim a shadow over the lives of the workers in the years between the two world wars. Underneath it all, real hardship is being endured in many households and a feeling that the decline in real wages may bring a return of an over-production crisis and of the spectre of unemployment. This in part explains why it is that so many recent Trade Union conferences have approved a new wage claim.

While support of a new wage claim was favoured at a majority of Trade Union conferences, not all were agreed. The advocates of wage restraint, ignoring the fact that it is wages that have constantly lagged behind prices, sought to persuade that the Unions should seek to effect an improvement in the wage structure rather than a direct increase. An application of this kind could incorporate proposals for wage increases, but experience tells us that it provides even greater scope for procrastination on the part of the employers than does a straight-forward claim for an increase. A wage increase is much more difficult to negotiate if it is complicated by consideration of the wages structure.

The policy of wage restraint operated between 1947 and 1950, has never been abandoned by many of the top leaders of the Trade Unions, despite its rejection at the 1950 Trades Union Congress. In 1950, while the Labour Government was still in power, Congress, having noted the contrast of rising prices and profits on the one hand, and falling living standards on the other, decided that until 'there is a reasonable limitation of profits, a positive planning of

our British economy and profits are subject to such control as will maintain the purchasing power of wages at a level affording to every worker a reasonable standard of living, there can be no basis for restraint on wage applications'. With the advent of a Tory Government, wage restraint has been even less palatable to the rank and file membership. Wage claims have been pressed on the grounds of the rising cost of living, increased productivity and excessively high profits. Prices and profits have continued to rise more than wages, and despite higher productivity the traditional aim of the Unions to maintain living standards has yet to be achieved.

Last year the Trades Union Congress again rejected wage restraint, but only (by platform persuasion) insofar as it did not interfere with the freedom of collective bargaining and independent arbitration. The same Congress rejected an Electrical Trades Union resolution for complete opposition to wage restraint on the grounds that it is the 'fundamental concept of the Trade Unions to uphold and improve the living standards of the working people', and agreeing to 'actively support the efforts of Unions to defend the living standards of their members by vigorous campaigning in favour of higher wages'. Collective bargaining finalised in the Arbitration Court is preferred by the dominant leadership of the T.U.C. to the traditional concept of organised resistance to any innovation likely to tend to the degradation of the wage earners as a class. It is hardly surprising that with such encouragement employers' resistance to claims for higher wages was greatly stiffened and had to be broken down by such action as the 24-hour strike of the engineers.

Wage restraint has its main support among right-wing leaders, who by their public declarations are more concerned to give arms to Hitler's successors than to put more wages in the pay packets of the workers. The same leaders actively pursue a witch hunt against militant workers because they seek to uphold the best traditions of our movement and to advance the struggle for higher real wages.

Renewed efforts are being made to restrain wage claims which are not based on the fact of increased production, but the facts of the degradation of living standards are too strong to be denied. The Trade Unions were born and have developed, as is made abundantly clear in the Webbs' classic History of Trade Unionism, to advance the standards of working people. This fundamental purpose is still the inspiration that will survive all attempts to divert the workers from their legitimate demands on industry.

MUST BRITAIN BE A SATELLITE?

QUÆSTOR

HARDLY at any time in our history can there have been such a flood of servile, sycophantic kow-towing before a foreign Power as rolled out to influence British public opinion in the days of the Washington Conference between Eisenhower and Dulles, Churchill and Eden (June 25-29).

'The role of Britain and the United States in the world balance has changed. That when the British leadership passed, it passed into American hands, is cause for British thanksgiving', wrote *The Times* (June 24). 'The dominant Power in the affairs of the Western world today is inevitably the United States', came the obedient echo from the *Daily Herald*, the same day. 'Only the United States can lead the Western world', said the *Manchester Guardian* (June 28). It was left for the Archbishop of York (July 8) to make the theory of British surrender into the whole duty of man, in the following nauseous cant: '(Britain) must recognise that the United States is now the senior partner. . . . Britain is now far weaker than America. As a result, America counts for more in world affairs than Britain. None of us likes this, but we have to accept it as a fact'. And Dr. Garbett began pleading with the British not to be 'resentful' or to do things which 'make Americans irritated with our country'.

If the published documents of the Washington conversations (including Sir Winston Churchill's speeches in Parliament on July 12 and 14) are to be believed, he and Mr. Eden certainly went a very, very long way to prevent the Americans becoming irritated. Of course there were some things that could not alter. They could not eliminate British imperialism's intense dislike of the U.S.A., on any pretext whatever, extending its foothold in South-East Asia: or the fear of being dragged into war by the Americans or American satellites: or resentment at America's tariff policy taking British trade for a ride when the prospect of economic crisis in the U.S.A. is growing. These big contradictions remain, even if glossed over by the Washington statements. Yet for all that Messrs. Eden and Churchill brought back a pretty miserable tale of humble pie, thankfully accepted and loyally swallowed.

On the burning question of Indo-China, they meekly accepted the American demand that there should be only an armistice agreement at Geneva, not a political settlement which might conceivably at

some time put the people of Indo-China in control of their country—presented in their double-talk as ‘demands which prevent an acceptable agreement regarding Indo-China’.

They agreed to begin discussions of a South-East Asia anti-Communist military pact ‘for collective defence’—which in their double-talk means (like the Hitler-Mussolini-Mikado anti-Comintern pact) for attack on the U.S.S.R. and China.

They obediently accepted the American demand that there should be no question, in the foreseeable future, of the Chinese people receiving their rightful seat in the United Nations Security Council: it is even reported that they thought of a clever dodge to promote an Indo-Chinese quarrel by offering China’s seat to India!

They agreed to make new joint public demands on France to accept the rearmament of Western Germany: and to present this act, which Churchill and Eden know well means an immediate and deadly threat to Britain, as though it was a ‘contribution to the defence of the free world’.

They signed a ‘Declaration’ (June 29) which, though babbling of world peace in every paragraph, transparently showed that its authors intend war (if they are left to their own devices)—by demanding ‘confirming deed’ as a preliminary for international friendship (as though American deeds in China and Taiwan, Korea and Guatemala, or the treacherous behaviour of their diplomats in Poland and Czechoslovakia, made the United States a peculiarly eligible and desirable friend); by threatening talk about ‘States now in bondage’—which in their double-talk means the countries of Eastern Europe where the peasants and workers have raised their economic and cultural standards to heights they never before knew, by shaking off the bondage of British, American, French and German finance-capital; and by pledging themselves to ‘maintain the spiritual, economic and military strength’ to promote ‘associations of appropriate nations’—in plain English, to build up exclusive anti-Soviet and anti-Chinese aggressive alliances.

All these undertakings injure the interests of the British people: but then, we should not ‘make Americans irritated with our country’!

And what did they gain by these concessions? A pledge that America would share her atom bomb secrets? Not on your life: only the promise of technical co-operation ‘to the fullest extent allowed by U.S. legislation’. Agreement to the now much-needed

top-level talk with the U.S.S.R. on outstanding questions (with which Churchill has made such politically profitable word-play, at election time and when things were going hard in Parliament)? Not at all: not one word. Then at least the tiniest relaxation on the crippling restrictions on Britain's trade, imposed by America? By no means. Their precious Declaration promised to promote only 'interchange of goods and services *among us*': and when Mr. Thorneycroft, President of the Board of Trade, flew across the Atlantic to discuss freer *East-West* trade, he was sent away with a flea in his ear (July 8).

However, the time has gone by when shameful deals of this kind, at the expense of nations with a powerful working-class movement, can go by unchallenged.

The American warmongers—in Senate, House of Representatives and the press—did not hesitate to proclaim their victory: more, they hurried on to consolidate it, by threatening to cut off the dole to France unless she ratified the E.D.C. agreement (to rearm Western Germany) by December 31, and to walk out of the United Nations if it dared to admit China. Letters of protest began to pour into the editorial offices of the British press; and that same *Manchester Guardian* which had so often licked the American jackboot in recent years found itself writing that the Republican leaders have 'almost closed the door on intelligent policies, either in Europe or in Asia', and demanding that Eden and Mendès-France should seek agreement at Geneva 'even if the United States stands aside' (July 7): and proclaiming that 'the United States is turning down an opportunity to seek peace, and that is contrary to the moral principles of a decent democracy' (July 8). That same *Daily Herald* which, a fortnight before, had accepted American world domination, now declared: 'It would be fatal to change British policy to suit America's state of mind' (July 9): and even the ultra-loyal *Economist* reluctantly admitted that, in a very few days, the 'glowing phrases' of Washington had been revealed to be 'merely a high polish on a cracked surface' (July 10).

We can be sure, however, that the cracks were not of the Tory Government's making, or even of the Labour right-wing leaders' design. When Mr. Attlee got up, on July 14, to denounce 'some tendencies in the United States', he knew—as most of his hearers did not—of the tremendous flood of resolutions denouncing German rearmament, the South-East Asia military pact, and the aggressive policy of America generally, which has once again poured into Transport House for the Labour Party Conference preliminary

agenda (published on July 19). The British working class, by making its voice heard in this direct way—and by the overwhelming majority against German rearmament at every recent trade union conference *where the rank and file were allowed to take decisions on the question beforehand*—has struck a first big blow for peace, and exercised a profound influence on more than Attlee's speech of July 14.

In doing so, it was acting in unison with the French working class, whose unchallenged leaders, the French Communist Party, were foremost in the campaign that brought down the Americans' government in France—the M.R.P.—and have since held the new Premier, Mendès-France, firmly to the job of making peace in Indo-China. This had already punctured the claims, alike of 'leadership' and 'dominance', of the Eisenhower-Churchill group: so much was admitted by the faithful *Economist* itself (July 10): 'The departure of M. Bidault and the arrival of M. Mendès-France had, in advance, rendered the Anglo-American meeting virtually powerless to take concrete decisions, either about Indo-China or about Europe.' There was a blow to the Archbishop, indeed—the French people, apparently, now 'count for more in world affairs' than even his revered 'senior partner' in Wall Street! And if the French people, led by their working class, have shown it is possible not to be America's satellite, why shouldn't the British people?

Already the proof that this is possible comes in the agreements signed at Geneva on July 20. The firm stand for peace of the Soviet, Chinese and Viet-Minh delegations—accepting compromises on the territory liberated and dates of elections—was successful because it was reinforced by pressure from the French people and the strong anti-Wall Street feeling of British Labour, revealed with such force. This was why Eden's back was stiffened after the inglorious agreement at Washington. This, too, was why Dulles flew to Paris and Bedell Smith to Geneva at the last stage of the Conference—after they had sworn to keep away. The working class of Britain and France has taken a hand in the Geneva settlement—and a new victory has been won for peace.

It is in this light that Churchill's statement of July 12 in favour of the peaceful co-existence of Communist and non-Communist countries, should be regarded. For Churchill it was one more skilful manoeuvre—between the Scylla of more and more grasping American ambitions, which spell complete destruction to Britain in an atomic war launched by America or her satellites like Adenauer,

and the Charybdis of rising working-class revolt against the imperialist policies pursued by Transport House and the Tories alike. Churchill knows very well what will go down with the British people at this moment. The words 'peaceful co-existence' as the alternative to 'appalling' modern war, and the talk of a meeting with Malenkov were forced from him as surely as if an all-British shop-stewards' delegation had dictated them. But the old fox tried to slip by, with and around them, other words—words about nations 'still in bondage' (meaning, not Guatemala or South Korea or British Guiana or Kenya, but the peoples which have flung off the capitalist system), words about 'ranging Germany definitely with what is called the free world' (meaning, not the liberation of the people of West Germany from rule by the Krupps and the Nazi generals, which was forced upon them once again after the war by Truman and Attlee, but on the contrary putting the East Germans under the same bloody, aggressive yoke). And these are the very words which are denounced, in scores upon scores of resolutions, in the preliminary agenda of the Labour Party Conference.

But if the working class of Britain, leading British public opinion against United States' domination, was strong enough to wring from Churchill verbal acceptance of the principle of peaceful co-existence, it is strong enough to insist on more. The scrapping of the sinister schemes for German rearmament, and the re-opening of talks with the U.S.S.R. on its general security plan for Europe; the calling of a Five-Power consultation of heads of States on the banning of weapons of mass destruction, with the way prepared by a joint declaration renouncing their use; free elections in Korea, made possible by evacuation of foreign troops and joint preparations by both Korean governments (only lying warmongers can now argue that they cannot sit down at the same table, after the Viet-Minh and Viet-Nam agreement at Geneva); immediate negotiations for a long-term trade agreement between Britain and the Soviet Union—such is the programme which Churchill should be made to discuss with Malenkov, if *talk* about peaceful co-existence is to be developed into *real* peaceful co-existence. And only the British working class is strong enough to make him do it—or get out as Laniel and Bidault had to get out. Britain need be no satellite or junior partner, if the workers press forward with the banner of her freedom and independence. That is the reply Geneva has given to Washington.

A VOICE FROM GUATEMALA

TEXT OF DECLARATION OF THE GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE EDITOR OF LABOUR MONTHLY

[This declaration, specially made to the Labour Monthly has a tragic history. On May 27, following the threatening speeches and proposals of the U.S.A., and the courageous reply by Senor Toriello (which brought supporting applause, though not votes, from the delegates of the other Latin American states at Caracas), we cabled to the Foreign Minister of Guatemala expressing our interest and requesting a statement. A reply radiogram promised it in time for a later issue. Senor Toriello apparently wrote this on June 15, three days before the American-inspired invasion across the southern border. The declaration, on the official note-paper and envelope of the Republic of Guatemala, was posted by air-mail on June 18, and should have been delivered here two to four days later. It did not reach this office until July 7, after the American-inspired aggression had been successful. It was correctly addressed. We print it as received.—Ed., L.M.]

FOR several years, the United States has been preparing to intervene in the internal affairs of Guatemala under the false and malicious pretext of communist infiltration. In April, 1953, before the Security Council of the United Nations, Guatemala denounced a series of acts which even then gave evidence of this intention. It showed that there existed a monstrous campaign of systematic defamation based on false and biased information to make it appear that Guatemala was an 'instrument of Moscow' and dangerous to the peace and security of the American Continent.

Guatemala showed that this campaign was promoted and financed by the United Fruit Company; that it was directed against the political progressiveness of this government in wishing to gain economic liberty for Guatemala and to raise the standard of living of its people. Guatemala showed that this company had obtained and enjoyed unfair privileges, that it owned immense areas of land, for the most part uncultivated, that it paid no taxes to the country except 1 cent a stem on exported bananas which have a value in the United States of \$8.00 a stem, that it owned the piers, the maritime transport and the radio communications, that it controlled the entire national railroad system under contracts, some of which do not

expire until 2009. The company has exploited the land, the economy and the workers of the country for more than fifty years. Altogether it has produced profits of more than \$50,000,000 annually without gain to this Republic.

This campaign has been echoed by high political figures in the United States, both in Congress and in the State Department—many of them stockholders of the United Fruit Company, or having business connections with it. They clamour for intervention in Guatemala and demand an economic boycott to provoke a situation which would overthrow the constitutional government and make possible the return of a dictatorship that would protect the illegitimate privileges this company had enjoyed with the complicity of unpopular governments.

For some years, but principally since the application of the agricultural reform law and the expropriation of uncultivated lands—despite the fact that it has been paid its worth under the same conditions as Guatemalans and other foreigners who were also expropriated by virtue of the same law—the United Fruit Company has fomented and amply financed numerous subversive movements in the interior of the country, with a view toward armed invasion, using as leaders exiled politicians who can count on considerable quantities of arms. Already aeroplanes have made two incursions over Guatemalan territory to drop propaganda and to urge a rebellion against the government. The company has also placed clandestine radio stations beyond our borders. These constantly incite the discontent to store arms to aid the invasion and cause the fall of the legitimately constituted government.

Out of partial failure of his political programme in Caracas, Mr. Dulles is now insisting that the governments of Latin-America serve as instruments of aggression against Guatemala—that the Organisation of American States should organise a crusade to destroy by force of arms the supreme government of this state, or at least apply sanctions of an economic character. He threatens that in case the governments of the other American countries do not comply, there will be unilateral action by the United States.

In this way the United Fruit Company, various Congressmen and high functionaries of the State Department, pretend to justify, with the enormous machinery of propaganda at their disposal, all these acts of provocation, intervention and aggression under the disreputable pretext that Guatemala has a government dominated by Soviet

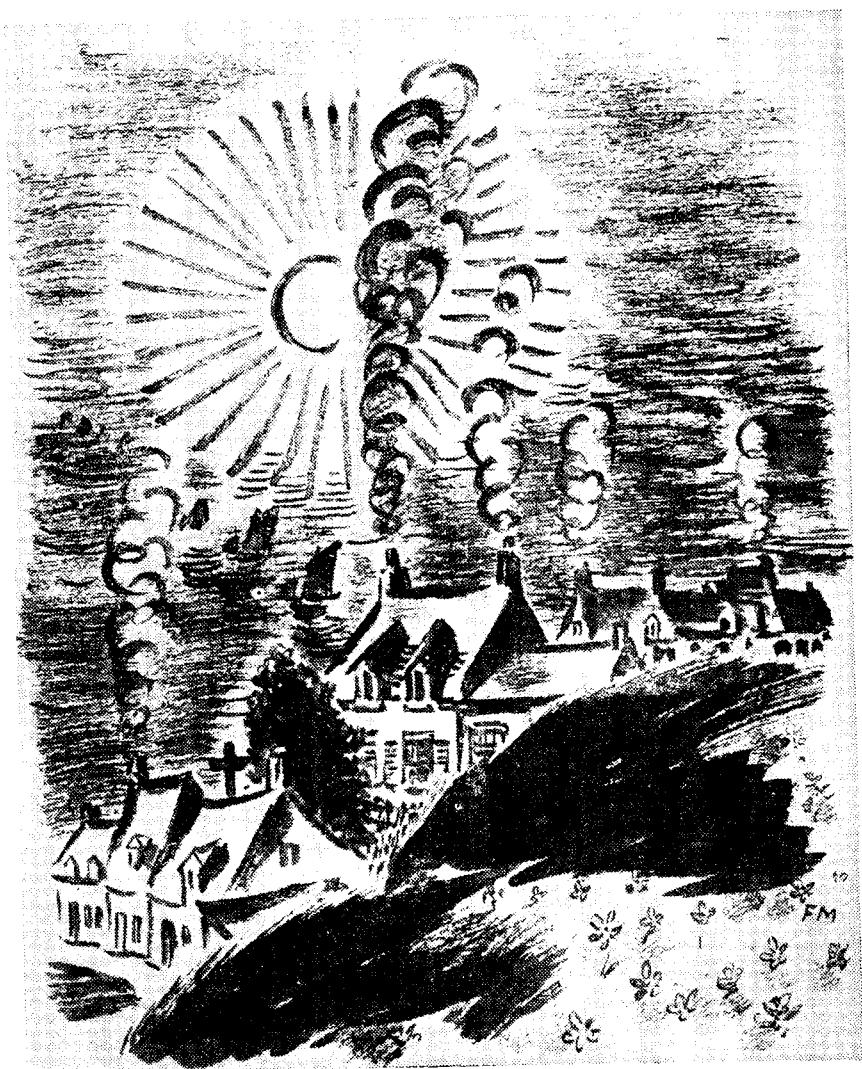
communism—‘a beachhead of the Soviet Union’ and a menace to the security of the United States and of the other republics of the Americas. The pretext is false and ridiculous, especially when they wish to present as an irrefutable proof of these base tales the arrival in Guatemala about the middle of May, of a quantity of war materials purchased in Europe for the national army. Apart from the sovereign right of any country to commercial freedom without the necessity of asking permission of any other government, the pretext is still ridiculous, because for almost ten years the government of the United States has systematically refused to sell to Guatemala a single rifle for the army, or even sporting arms to private individuals. It has been so obstructive, by both legal and illegal methods, that this country has had to obtain its arms where it can. This same government of the United States has concluded military pacts with countries which are neighbours to Guatemala with the evident desire of provoking a fratricidal war in Central America, and present an opportunity for deciding the fray to benefit United States’ interests and investments.

The government of Guatemala has definitely declared that the arms received are destined for the national army exclusively for the defence of the sovereignty, independence and integrity of the Republic, to maintain internal order and guarantee the constitutionality and democracy of the country’s rule. In no case would it allow their use for menacing or assaulting any other country. On the contrary, toward our neighbouring states Guatemala wishes to maintain unchanged the cordial ties of friendship of brother peoples. To prove the sincerity of this declaration, Guatemala has proposed to the Republic of Honduras the celebration of a treaty of friendship and non-aggression which the government of Honduras is at present studying.

The government of Guatemala also declares that it is not communistic, nor is it dominated by communism; that it is not nor could it ever be a satellite of the Soviet Union or of the United States, or of any other power. We are engaged only in the arduous and difficult struggle for economic independence, to elevate the low existence level of our people and to make effective our independence and sovereignty without interference, compromise or pressures of any sort.

(Signed) GUILLERMO TORIELLO,
Minister of Foreign Relations.

PEACE AND WAR





from the series of lithographs " DESTINY" by FRANS MASEREEL

DISCIPLES OF HITLER

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.

BOTH at home and in foreign relations the United States' ruling class has shown of recent years a definite move in the direction of fascism. This dangerous development is natural, if indeed not inevitable, in this stage—the last—of the history of capitalism in the light of the nature and causes of fascism and the extreme concentration of industrial capitalism in America.

It is as a significant move of this type that we should study the recent destruction of a moderate liberal regime in Guatemala, and draw from it a number of lessons in relation to the U.S.A. and to the United Nations. The destruction was achieved by a combination of the Hitler-McCarthy 'red smear'; of the arming, incitement and financing of emigrés and other reactionary elements in neighbouring states (parallel with some years of determined obstruction of any supply of arms to Guatemala herself), and of the supply of P47 bombers for the actual operations. It is, in substance, the technique employed by the prototype Hitler in Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia, lacking only the wholesale direct intervention of U.S. troops, which under modern conditions was not necessary.

The essential facts of the transaction are by now pretty clear. The government of President Arbenz was not communist. Even *The Times* used of it the modest phrase 'Communist-tolerant'—surely a new description of political virtue—and a strongly anti-Communist American Conservative, Mr. Samuel Guy Inman, wrote:—

In comparison with the programme of Labour in Great Britain and the New Deal in the United States, Guatemalan reforms were a mild shade of pink.

There were in fact only four Communist members in the legislature; and there was certainly no Communism in the programme of social security, agrarian reform, and nationalisation of unused lands in return for compensation at the value put upon them by the holders for taxation purposes. In February, 1953, at a time when minor revolts or 'putsches' were being organised against the government, with direct aid from the United Fruit Company, essentially a colonial power in Central America, the *New York Times* wrote, accurately enough:—

If there had not been a single Communist in Guatemala, the revolutionaries who overthrew dictator Jorge Ubico—that was in 1944, four years before the formation of the Communist Party—still would have insisted on the present programme . . . generally condemned as Communist-inspired.

Of course it was 'condemned as Communist-inspired'. It had dared to challenge the domination of the United Fruit Company which was paying out of the super-exploitation of Central American workers dividends of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. per annum to John Foster Dulles and its other powerful shareholders; and, as Mr. Inman wrote in the book already quoted:—

The little country of Guatemala has so long been the happy hunting-ground for economic exploiters that they took advantage of the fear of Communism to challenge any change from the old economic slavery.

There is no difficulty in showing that the rebellion was incited and armed by the U.S. rulers. The evidence of U.S. complicity is formidable alike in quality and quantity. I have space for no more than one or two items of proof. The first is that, in 1953, according to the statement published by the Guatemalan government on January 29, 1954, 'the person in charge of preparing the criminals and saboteurs and of training the communications technicians' for the invasion of Guatemala then being plotted was 'Col. Carl Studea, an officer who was retired from the North American army so that he could place himself at the disposal of the United Fruit Company'. Another is that on March 12, 1953, one Spruille Braden, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American affairs, who had become Chief of Public Relations for the United Fruit Company, described Guatemala in a speech as a 'beachhead for international communism' and said that the suppression 'even by force' from the outside, of this Communism 'would not constitute an intervention in the internal affairs' of Guatemala. Further illustration lies in the activity of one Peurifoy, until recently U.S. Ambassador in Greece and a specialist in the craft of bullying small countries through 'diplomatic' machinery. This 'diplomatic' equivalent of General Gruenther stated publicly in Guatemala City, the capital of the country to which he was accredited, that 'public opinion *in the U.S.* might force us'—by 'us' he meant, of course, the rulers of the U.S.A., who manufacture 'public opinion in the U.S.' like they manufacture chewing gum, comics and hydrogen bombs—to take some measures to prevent Guatemala from falling into the lap of international Communism. *We cannot permit* a Soviet republic to be established between Texas and the Panama Canal'. (The word

'Soviet' has a good many meanings; it must now apparently include any liberal prepared to defy the United Fruit Company or Mr. Peurifoy.) *Newsweek* of July 12, 1954, was able to say:—

Peurifoy was not surprised by the events which tumbled the Arbenz regime. Last May, when the government seemed completely stable, Peurifoy was asked when trouble would break out. 'I will not make a prediction', he replied, 'but I will tell you one thing. We are making out our Fourth of July reception invitations now, and we are not including the names of any of the present administration'.

It is not surprising that when, after the murder of liberalism in Guatemala had been accomplished, Armas, the leader of the U.S.-inspired rebels, and Monzon the newly appointed leader of the U.S.-inspired junta which had taken over control in Guatemala—at one remove—from President Arbenz, when the latter shrank from continuing military resistance to rebels who had demonstrated that they were both able and willing to bomb Guatemalan cities and their populations to annihilation with P47 bombers supplied by the U.S.A., met to settle terms like a couple of gangsters sharing the loot, Peurifoy was there. Accredited to the government they had just destroyed with his government's help, he not merely attended their meeting but actually brought them to terms. *The Times* makes this quite clear, adding that Peurifoy 'has done much behind the scenes to end the fighting, and to overthrow the Arbenz regime'. (It is *The Times*, too, which makes it abundantly clear that it was the use, and the threat of the further use, of P47 bombers, and not any lack of popular support for the legitimate government, that enabled the murderers to succeed in their dirty work.)

The proceedings which followed—wholesale arrests and many shootings of those who can be smeared as Communist, disfranchisement of the 70 per cent. of the population who, being illiterate, need political representation more than anyone else, are of course the usual paraphernalia of a fascist-occupier. It is obvious that they will not stop the ultimate triumph of progress in Guatemala; but they will bring delay, misery, and cruel oppression for a time.

The whole brutal story is of course much more than a lesson in first principles for the student of development towards fascism. It may have very important results, perhaps very dangerous ones. But it has useful results, too. It unmask the rulers of the U.S.A. for those who had not so far freed themselves from the old belief that the decency of the American people was reflected in their government; and it greatly increases the hatred felt for those rulers in most parts of the world, above all in Latin-America. This is of great

importance; for in many countries, particularly in Western Europe, one of the obstacles to the progress of the peace movement has been the reluctance of substantial numbers of middle-of-the-road people to shake off their belief in the peaceful objects of the American government. Now, most of them know; and they are beginning to reassess Korea, Indo-China, Marshall Aid, German rearmament, and the attitude to the Chinese People's Republic, in the light of their new knowledge, and thus to see the true 'nature of the beast'.

This revelation is perhaps of the most value in relation to the United Nations. Many people in the West, having faith in the United Nations, and building their hopes of peace upon its work, have naturally enough accepted its decisions and pronouncements as something done honestly in the service of peace, and not 'wangled' in the interests of particular ruling groups. And now, what do they see? How did the Security Council, which had displayed four years before such a headlong readiness to condemn the North Koreans—without evidence and without a hearing—for an aggression which is now admitted to have been committed *against* the North Koreans by Syngman Rhee, behave in the case of Guatemala?

The rebellion started about June 18. The Security Council met on the 20th, tried at once to shuffle off its responsibilities onto the shoulders of the 'Organisation of American States', a body whose likely role in such a matter was foreshadowed on June 10, ten days before, by John Foster Dulles, when he said that he hoped that the organisation would help the people of Guatemala 'to rid themselves of the malignant force which had seized on them' (*i.e.*, of the government which they had elected by a huge majority, and which they continued to support because it had raised the standards of workers and peasants alike by distributing surplus lands to those who wished to cultivate them). This disgraceful attempt—like that of a policeman who, summoned to arrest a murderer, suggests that the matter should be entrusted to the murderer's nephew—was stopped by the veto of the U.S.S.R. The Security Council thereupon passed, on a suggestion of the representative of France, a resolution calling on all parties to cease fire. (It could hardly do less!)

The rebels took no notice of this, and the U.N. took notice of their taking no notice. It did, indeed, precisely nothing, until, on Guatemala's insistence, it met again on June 25; and it then did rather worse than nothing, for it actually removed the Guatemalan problem from its agenda. Throughout this disgraceful operation,

the British Government, both at the U.N. and in Parliament, shuffled and evaded. By that time, the rebellion had in effect succeeded, as the Arbenz government, reluctant to see the country blown to pieces by U.S. bombers, had given way to Diaz, who gave way to Monzon, who took part in the joint wake of the murderers described above.

The effects of this U.N. behaviour, and the lessons to be drawn from it, are most important. Faith in the U.N. as at present operated is largely destroyed; and the need to clean up the organisation and compel it to work in accordance with its Charter and with the principles which inspired its creation, become more clear and more urgent. The U.N. is at present dominated by the U.S.A., which operates it on ordinary 'Western-democratic' lines, that is, on the footing that all that matters is what serves American interests, and that the way to secure those interests is by international gerrymandering, retaining the Formosa phantoms and dragooning or bribing any other satellites that may be available, so that a 'majority' of votes, on paper (often representing, in terms of populations, less than one-third of the total), may achieve what the Washington disciples of Hitler desire. The Guatemalan disclosures have made such operations infinitely more difficult; and thus, at the moment when it becomes important and urgent to clean up U.N.O., it becomes easier. The first and most urgent steps are that the Chinese People's Government should be admitted to its rightful place, and that the British government should be forced by public opinion to play an active and progressive role, in co-operation with the Soviet Union, China, and every other honest country, to make U.N.O. operate honestly.

One more lesson to be drawn lies, I think, in the appalling dangers involved in the specifically Hitlerite technique of the 'smear'. This is now very highly developed in the U.S.A., where it works particularly easily on a somewhat naive public with an unexampled development of the means of propaganda. If enough 'indoctrination' is used, people can be conditioned to accept anything labelled Communist as Communist, and to make no enquiry into the meaning of the word, but to take it as axiomatic that everything so labelled is evil. Once reaction has got that far, it does not need to argue or convince, still less of course to remedy real evils; it can—so long as people will let themselves be bamboozled—resist every reform by lying, and justify any and every aggression—in Korea, Indo-China, Guatemala, or anywhere else—on the plea of 'saving the free world from Communism'. Happily, like staving off a slump by armaments races, the smear technique can only work for a while;

in the end it explodes. But it is not for us to wait for explosions; we have to move in actively and remove the causes of the trouble.

Lastly, the Guatemala story enables and compels us all, not only those who have long worked for peace in a full understanding of the role of the American rulers but also those newly-enlightened by their realisation of the true facts, to see more clearly the dangers involved in rearming Western Germany as part of E.D.C. and of N.A.T.O. The Washington gangsters who trampled down Guatemala are not the sort of people who can be trusted to use West-German military forces for peace; they cannot be trusted with weapons at all, for they would use them to 'contain Communism', *i.e.*, to attack anything that they do not like.

This wicked proposal, supported now only by the rulers of America, the rulers of Great Britain, the puppet rulers of West-Germany and a certain number of their dupes, has evoked in the governments of most other countries, and in the masses everywhere, the most profound distrust. We can—as we must—fight it with renewed vigour and hope, with the help of millions of new allies.

‘IN THE WINGS’

J. D. L. NICHOLSON*

THE bare announcement that Arthur Deakin had been made a member of the Privy Council (henceforward to be known as the ‘Right Honourable’), would not, we think, have attracted very much attention (after all, we are constantly being told of the ‘Honours’ the labour and trade union movement are receiving at the hands of a hostile social system by the award of this or that order), if it had not been for the importance and significance attached to it by the anti-socialist and imperialist daily, *The Times*, which devoted quite considerable space in an editorial ‘In the Wings’ (June 11) to both the appointment and to its own idea of what it portends.

Viewed objectively, what does the appointment of Arthur Deakin benefit the trade union and labour movement? He is nearly 65 years of age, when he will retire under the constitution of his trade union, the Transport and General Workers. He has not shown a marked desire to accept democracy—if it conflicts with his idea of

*As many of our readers will know, Alderman Nicholson is Secretary of the Hull and District Trades Council.

what should be (instance the London Dockers' strike a few years ago when he even refused to see a deputation of his own members and the police were called in). He will not readily accept opposition views to his own and 'flies off the handle' to his own members and to other trade union members (instance T. O'Brien last year) who have opinions contrary to his. Basking in the shadow of the reputation of his predecessor Ernest Bevin, he can be relied on not to oppose even the most reactionary line of action, as long as it will rid him of any opposition to his viewpoint.

The Times, in its too-well-informed for our liking, and possibly inspired, paragraphs says the appointment to the Privy Council of a trade union leader (no more than a year before his retirement) is 'rare enough in itself to cause comment', and it proceeds to do so. Claiming that Arthur Deakin is 'at the height of his powers' (this at the age when so many workers are compulsorily retired as being past useful productive work) and has shown signs of 'assuming the mantle of his predecessor Ernest Bevin', *The Times* doubts whether a Labour Government 'could be formed without a trade union leader of almost equal power and equal stature sitting at the Prime Minister's right hand', and concludes that Deakin is 'the obvious candidate'.

But who then is the candidate for Prime Minister?

Going on to ruminate on the death of Arthur Greenwood, the editorial says the leadership needs 'new blood'. For 'Attlee, Morrison and Griffiths, all of them elderly statesmen, are the only members of Parliament representing the official policy' (what the rest of the Parliamentary Labour Party think to that one wouldn't know), and finally winds up with the conclusion that the treasurership now vacant of the Labour Party, 'is in the gift of the large trade unions', and that their favoured candidate will be . . . well Mr. Gaitskell is 'In the Wings'. When we see Arthur Deakin and Hugh Gaitskell wrapped as it were in the imperialist cocoon of the anti-Labour *Times*, we are entitled to think and say: 'who are the Fellow Travelers of Conservatism?'

We doubt whether there are more than a handful of rank-and-filers who take *The Times* at 4d. a copy; it is beyond most; so the object of the 'inspired' paragraph can only be to prepare the minds of those hostile to Labour that Arthur Deakin is the logical right-hand man ('no one could expect him *to withdraw from public life and write his memoirs*') of a future Labour Prime Minister and that in the official leadership Hugh Gaitskell 'has few, if any, rivals'.

What the ordinary workers think, including the members of the Transport and General Workers, would be illuminating. The loud voice and domineering manner sometimes denotes the small mind; power to dictate breeds the dictator; and it is rare to find that a persuasive line has been taken by Arthur Deakin towards his own members and other trade unionists who dared to differ from him.

But now, at a time when the rearming of Germany is prominent in debates and discussions among Labour Party and trade union members and even with a 50-50 for and against it throughout the movement; when the official 'fors' are plugging all over—press, broadcasting and speech-stumping all over the country and even the continent; when Hugh Gaitskell and others are using every effort to get approval of E.D.C. (except the German Socialist counterpart of the British Labour Party, who are themselves against it); at a time when the peace-loving peoples of all nations, the workers, are wrought with the fear of the immense destructive power of the atom and hydrogen bombs and other inhuman weapons for the decimation of mankind, we read in that imperialist anti-Labour organ 'Now Mr. Deakin and Mr. Gaitskell are ready in the wings'.

MR. GAITSKELL'S CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY

(From an exclusive interview with the *Ceylon Daily News*, March 12, 1954.)

Q. Would you regard it as dangerous for a democratic country if a Communist Party was in a position to take power by the ballot?

A. Yes, it would be dangerous because the result would be the establishment of a dictatorship. But what a democracy should do in such an event is a difficult question, and it is often discussed. My own opinion is that if a Communist Party is near to taking power—and you know what the result of that will be—the democratic parties are entitled to stop it by suppressing the Communist Party. In other words, democracy can work only if all parties observe what are called the 'rules of the game'.

We in England, fortunately, have never had a large Communist Party. As long as it is very small, it is better to have complete freedom, but if democracy itself is threatened, I do not think it should commit suicide. It may be necessary to deprive some people of freedom in order to preserve the greater freedoms of society.

THE ETHNOLOGY OF INDO-CHINA

MARCEL NER

[We are pleased to print this article by the famous French ethnographer Professor Marcel Ner, who has made for over twenty years an elaborate study of the populations of Indo-China. Professor Ner in the spring of this year visited London and created a profound impression amongst very wide circles by the informed picture he was able to give on the situation in Indo-China. As readers will see his analysis is not made from a Marxist viewpoint, but provides indispensable material for an evaluation.—Ed., L.M.]

TO understand the political and social problems confronting Indo-China so tragically at the present day, an understanding of its ethnology is needed: and this throws an even clearer light on these problems when it is seen from a dynamic, and not a static, viewpoint.

I. *Diversity of the Indo-Chinese Populations*

There is an extreme diversity. As regards race, Mongolian characteristics (slit eye, high cheekbones, yellowish skin) predominate amongst almost all Vietnamese and in some groups of highlanders, so that the big majority of the population resembles the Chinese. Among the Laotians (a section of the Thai peoples), a large number of Cambodians and of highlanders, there predominates an Indonesian type, akin to the Indo-European type, which has played a part in forming the Vietnamese strain. Finally a former Negroid element still survives, especially in cross-breeding, amongst some southern highlanders or in Cambodia. Thus the great divisions of mankind are found side by side or intermingled.

As regards language, the diversity is even greater. Cambodians, as well as many highlanders, speak a Mon-Khmer language, a tongue found in patches as far west as India. Laotian, like Siamese, belongs to a language group of much greater consequence, that of the Thai tongues, wide-spread in the upland valleys of North Indo-China and of Burma and in vast tracts of Southern China. To what family of languages Vietnamese is to be ascribed is hard to say. In some of its older features it resembles Mon-Khmer, in others Thai: but the influence of Chinese has been very strong. Like Chinese it is monosyllabic and has tone distinction; very many terms in its vocabulary

as well as the old forms of the written language are borrowed from Chinese. In a similar way Cambodian and Laotian came under the influence of Sanskrit and Pali; and so took up many Indo-European words and took over Indian-type scripts.

As regards religion there is a like diversity. Though Buddhism is lodged in Vietnam, as in Cambodia and Laos, the forms of it there are different and the intensity is different. Cambodians and Laotians alike adhere to the Hinayana (the Lesser Vehicle) which came to them straight from India or Ceylon. The whole life of the Cambodians is shot through with Buddhism in this form, as is demonstrated by the part played by the bonzes (the Buddhist priesthood) and by the fact that fishery, cattle-trading and butchery, etc., are left to foreigners. The Laotian combines with Buddhism the worship of spirits and more profane tendencies. Mahayana Buddhism (the Greater Vehicle) which came to the Vietnamese *from China is combined with very many other forms of worship*: ancestor-worship, nature-worship of various kinds (the soil, sky and earth, waters, trees, rocks), Taoism, and finally Confucianism—less a religion than a complex of ceremonial rites and of moral and civic rules. About one-tenth of the Vietnamese and a few highlanders are Catholic, and an even smaller number are Protestant.

Among the Vietnamese and some highlanders the family is of the extensive kind, (and patriarchal) and thus plays a big part. The Chams and many of the southern highlanders retain the great family with mother-right: that is, one in which the name of the family, property and powers are inherited through the women. It is the girl, or her parents, who makes the offer of marriage, and it is in her house that the husband comes to live. Amongst the Laotians and Cambodians the family as an institution plays a smaller part.

As regards demography there are also wide differences. The northern and central river deltas are overpopulated, having often a density of population of more than 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometre* in purely agricultural areas. Undernourishment is chronic in these parts, despite grinding toil. The southern river deltas and the interior on the other hand have a much slighter density of population, which gives rise to a demographic unbalance; and this in large measure explains the history of the country and the contrast in character between Tongkinese or Annamites of the North, rugged inhabitants of overpopulated soil, and the other Indo-Chinese to whom the land offers more abundant resources.

*Nearly 2,600 per square mile or over four to the acre.

Finally, on the economic and cultural level there are big differences. For centuries these differences have separated Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians, permeated by the great civilisations of China or India, from the highlanders, many of whom had neither wheel nor road nor writing. Now the differences have been renewed by the speed at which the Vietnamese have been going after western techniques and ideas, while the mystical Cambodians and dreamy Laotians were lingering in their past.

Bringing together these multifarious characteristics, one may discern definite groups, of which some merit the name of nation; while others, too limited, can but be assimilated or constitute self-governing minorities.

II. *The Indo-Chinese Nations*

First and foremost comes the Vietnamese nation. On an ethno-linguistic map it takes up scarcely more than one-tenth of the territory, but it comprises about four-fifths of the population. It takes the lead also by its extraordinary vitality. Their ancestors lived by hunting, fishing and a shifting agriculture (burning out temporary clearings) in the Red River delta. Shortly before the Christian era, the dominance of China transformed their techniques, their laws, their beliefs, enriched their language and gave them letters. They accepted this evolution, but after nine centuries of struggle freed themselves from political suzerainty. From this time onwards they were a powerful state, with rich rice fields protected by dykes, a metal industry and their numbers speedily increasing. They moved southwards, following the coast and brought into cultivation new rice fields. After long struggles they did away with the Cham kingdoms and then, in the vast deltas of the south, they forced the Khmers to retire.

It was not a settlement in compact masses except on low-lying land (less than 33 feet above sea-level) but inland they fought against the Siamese who, like themselves, were seeking to impose their rule upon the Cambodians, the Laotians and the highland tribes. The Vietnamese became, in fact, masters of the greater part of Indo-China.

From the beginning of the sixteenth century they came into contact with European traders and missionaries. Often they gave a favourable reception to their merchandise, a new script and especially their weapons: they showed curiosity about their techniques, their sciences and their religions. At other times, however,

they offered resistance, or massacred and persecuted the foreign priests and their flocks. Accustomed to a plurality of religions, the Vietnamese were exasperated by the exclusiveness and intolerance of the Christian missionaries; by their lust to prohibit the other religions with cults and rites that were bound up with daily work, with the family circle and with the structure of the state; and by their sacrilegious lust to destroy temples and holy images. The protection of Catholics was the pretext invoked by Napoleon III first to intervene and then to set up his authority in Cochin-China, in Annam and in Tongking.

The French domination was to have consequences not unlike those of the old Chinese domination. After some hesitation the Vietnamese opened their door to the new influences but in a variety of ways. With rare exceptions, emperors and high mandarins became servants of the conqueror. Their extortions, their violence, their abject submission, provoked popular hatred against them. The sentiment for the monarchy, meantime, was sapped by the influence of republicanism in France and China. It was to be finally eliminated by the moral mediocrity of the last sovereign, his abdication, his return to power amid foreign tanks and airplanes, the napalm and the bombs used against his own people; by the greed and baseness of the puppets who, as his henchmen, took on a semblance of power.

The essential social structure, the rural community comprising nine-tenths of the population, continued to live its own life. The white man's law, like the king's law, stopped short at the gates of the village. The peasants were crushed under heavy taxes, compulsory purchase of alcohol, extortion and usury. They got little benefit from economic development. Only irrigation works—and even these were more often than not to the advantage of a few privileged people—were of value to them, as harbours, roads and railways were not. The great majority (80 per cent.) remained illiterate, and it is difficult to say whether in this respect there has been progress or regression. Better hygiene, unaccompanied by improved production, resulted in a disproportionate increase of population and diminished the share available for each person. Although industrialisation had been held back in the interests of Metropolitan industries the development of estates and big plantations produced a wretched and uprooted proletariat.

The intellectuals, attracted by French culture, by the friendliness and absence of colour prejudice of some of the French in Indo-China

and the vast majority of French at home, were thrown back into an intransigent nationalism by the brutalities, abuses and stupidities of a colonialism which denied to them, in their own country, the positions and salaries to which they were entitled by their mastery of the western techniques and culture combined with their own. They were thus driven either to fight us or to wait secretly for the hour of revolt, both in the name of their national traditions, in their own interest, and for their own dignity, as in the name of the principles which we had taught but had not practised toward them.

On the other hand the Vietnamese found through their rapid mastery of the French language and techniques a way to resume their ancient expansion throughout Indo-China. Our roads and our hygiene had opened the way for them: they moved on to the uplands, lodged themselves in the countryside of Laos and Cambodia, and especially in the towns there, as fishermen, farmers, artisans and functionaries, in all the administrative and technical public services. Thus the Vietnamese nation, on the eve of World War II, could show all the numbers, strength, trained personnel and national feeling needed to form a vigorous independent state as well as all the ferment of a social transformation.

The reverse process had taken place in Cambodia. The enchanting ruins at Angkor bear witness to her ancient power. But Cambodia had been gradually weakened by internal stresses and by the blows of the Siamese and Vietmanese. Thus the richest lands had been lost, such as Cochin-China, still inhabited by 350,000 Khmers, while other provinces had become Siamese. The French Protectorate (1863) doubtless saved Cambodia from complete extinction. Most of the 3,750,000 inhabitants are Khmers, with a strong attachment to Buddhism as their religion and to their King. Their mysticism kept them aloof from our schools and from the modern world. Their technicians and administrators were mainly French or Vietnamese. Their artisans, their traders and their fishermen were Moslem Chams, Vietnamese or Chinese. (One third of the population of the capital were Chinese, one third Vietnamese and only one third Khmer.) They show, then, the essential characteristics of a nation but they will find it hard, through lack of trained people, to develop an independent state.

Laos appears still weaker. There is scarcely a million and a half inhabitants in a territory the size of Great Britain. Only a million are Laotians. As in Cambodia they have no modern trained personnel. Their state is a creation of France, which established its pro-

tectorate on the model of Vietnam and thus linked up the long-separated principalities of Xieng-Khouang Luang-Prabang and Vien Tiane. In addition, Laos is overshadowed by the presence in the west and north of more numerous groups speaking the same language, of the same race and with the same customs. Even more than Cambodia its independence in order to be settled, needs guarantees, or goodwill abroad.

If the king, the crown prince and the government, have behaved like those of Cambodia—with greater dignity and patriotic feeling than the Bao Dai gang, they seem nevertheless too much attached to an out-dated feudalism. The re-establishment of peace in Vietnam would probably result in an agreement between the king and Pathet Lao; the latter, under the leadership of Prince Souphanouvong, no doubt means upon the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but would not have been able to extend its authority without the support or acquiescence of the people.

III. *The Minorities*

There are in Indo-China about a million mountain people (highlanders) dispersed between the three states. But the greater number are in the territory of Vietnam where the French administration had granted some degree of autonomy to two groups: the Thai group in Tongking and the Mui group in the south. There is no doubt that these populations used to live in fear of their neighbours and especially the Vietnamese, whose mandarins and traders exploited them harshly. These groups are differentiated by their language, religion, social structure, manners and standard of life. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam is pursuing towards them a policy based on equality of rights and respect for their languages and customs. The defence of minorities therefore can no longer be invoked against the new Vietnamese state.

Conclusion

The Ethnological study of Indo-China shows therefore the presence of three nations already organised into states, whose independence should, in accordance with the common principles of democracy, be respected. For this, the withdrawal of all foreign troops is sufficient. One of these nations is vigorous and has already proved by the organisation of its army, its administration, its government and its economy that it is equal or superior to many states. An end to this atrocious war would allow the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to show on a new plane the qualities which are hers. A free

association with France on a footing of complete equality would be to the mutual advantage of the two countries. The two others are as yet tender plants. The guarantees that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is ready to give regarding their independence, the guarantees that could be given by the too-often opposed world blocs, could be the assurance of a peace in Indo-China which would serve powerfully the peace of the world. Their free adhesion to the French Union could be favourable to their economic, social and political development—if it were founded on reciprocal respect for the interests, regimes and governments that each of these peoples would choose for itself.

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Reference. In Mr. Pritt's article in the June issue, page 279, the reference to South Korea having started the war is taken from the statement by B. C. Limb (Syngmann Rhee's ambassador in the U.S.A.) on October 19, 1953—recently reproduced in *Russia Today Newsletter* of June 26.

Communication

LETTER TO AN INDIAN COMRADE

To Raghupathi Reddy

Dear Comrade,

What a wealth of memories were awakened in my mind when I read your letter in our journal *World News* a few days ago! I remembered another letter you wrote to our stalwart comrade Pritt in 1951, which was published in *Labour Monthly* in May of that year. Reading again through your two letters I felt a tremendous pride in our international Communist movement, in the reserves of courage and self-sacrifice it can command and in the daily work going on all over the world to further the cause of humanity.

I was in India and Burma from 1943 to 1946, fighting in the 14th Army to destroy Japanese imperialism and, as I and many others hoped, to help the peoples of the Far East to a better life. I saw the terrible poverty, the disease, the wretched ignorance of your people. I saw the reality of imperialism. I swore that I would give all my strength to destroying such an evil system. In Hyderabad in 1946 I saw the contrast between poverty of the most appalling kind and the luxurious life of your own Nizam, then the richest man in the world.

The 'pukka Sahibs', the officials who kept your country as a backward agricultural community, a reserve of mercenary soldiers, were sorry that thousands of British soldiers like myself should see how our own capitalists solved their problems. For the first time your people met numbers of British soldiers who considered you more than servants, who met you in your homes and not

merely in brothels. Both your people and mine treasure the memory of the soldier Clive Branson, killed in Burma, whose book *British Soldier in India* showed not only your wretchedness but your age-old culture, your learning and the dignity of Hindu and Mohammedan, Untouchable and Christian, despite the sub-human role assigned to you.

I was in Bengal shortly after the famine of 1942. Never shall I forget the sight of thousands of corpses, victims of the callous inefficiency of a system which was alien to a vast majority of your people. These scenes burnt themselves ineffaceably on my mind. But I saw others: I saw the beauty of the Himalayas, the grace and loveliness of the Taj Mahal, built by your nameless ancestors, the antique charm of your dancers, the loyalty and courage of your soldiers, the animated bustle of your people.

Many of the soldiers I served with were aroused to a hatred of capitalism and imperialism by what they saw. And many were not surprised when they read of the great steps forward you are taking on the road to a free Socialist India. I have often reproached myself that I have not done enough to explain the cause of the Indian people since I returned. In 1951 I spoke at a meeting in Hyde Park on behalf of yourself and all the Telengana prisoners. As the meeting finished a message came that the death sentences had been commuted to life imprisonment. The audience cheered with joy and relief. But you have served another three years in prison since, while Nazi war criminals in Germany are being released!

In your last letter you talk of a debt you owe to us for helping to save you. To that lion of a man, that hero among lawyers, D. N. Pritt, you may owe a debt. But to us others you owe no debt. Rather do we owe you our debt of revolutionary honour. Like Dimitrov you have mastered the language of the oppressor as you suffered.

I recall that when you were first detained in 1948 you were 17 years old. Indeed, 'Communism is the youth of the world'. You Telengana twelve need feel 'no torturing regret for years without purpose'. We know that your people are advancing irresistibly towards a democratic Socialist India, a country in which illiteracy, famine and oppression will be wiped out. We are proud to have helped you in some small measure. As I write to you I am re-reading a book I bought in Hyderabad eight years ago called *The Bengal Tragedy*. One passage reads: 'Children lie on the roadside dust, women in rags hunt the dustbins in towns for morsels of food and babies are abandoned by starving parents'. And the *News Chronicle* of London commented: 'A million deaths from famine and its attendant diseases in five months in one corner of the British Empire: that is a horrible fact which must challenge alike our honour and our statesmanship'.

No, we will not forget. We could not forget. The Telengana peasants will conquer, the chettians will be set to useful work, the flag of socialism will unite Tamil, Bengali, Madrassi and Kashmiri. The debt we owe you for your steadfastness, your Communist honour, your proletarian integrity, will be discharged. 'Labour with a white skin will never be free until labour with a black skin is free also.'

All over the world, in Malaya and Kenya, China and the Philippines, Guatemala, Korea and Vietnam, all the fiendish devilry of modern imperialist blackmail and war; atom and hydrogen bomb threats, germ warfare, mass destruction, embargoes, bans; all these methods are being used to keep down the so-called 'backward' peoples. But they won't work. Capitalism, Imperialism, War—the evil trinity—have never worked. The only thing which will work is Socialism.

Harry Pollitt, Palme Dutt, Ben Bradley—they speak for all of us. With them and with D. N. Pritt we salute you. We salute your courage. I repeat your words, 'Dear Comrade, we have not forgotten you'. And we will not rest until you are free.

With revolutionary greetings,

LAWRENCE GREEN

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Book Reviews

HARRY POLLITT AND SPAIN

Selected Articles and Speeches, by Harry Pollitt, Vol. II (144 pp. Lawrence & Wishart 5s.).

THIS volume is bound to make an indelible impression on the mind of every reader. Here are the speeches and writings of a man who saw and understood the march of events more clearly than any other in Britain. He was able speedily to reach correct conclusions on each of the rapid succession of world-shaking happenings that crowded so swiftly on top of each other in those three brief years before the outbreak of war in 1939. Just a fortnight after Franco started the military rising on July 19, 1936, in Spain, Harry Pollitt wrote these words:

The struggle in Spain is the world at the crossroads. The signs are clearly pointed—democracy and peace, or fascism and war.

That is the issue. Let us respond. He responded to the struggle in Spain as did no other man in these islands. Day and night he slaved away with apparently limitless energy for the cause of the Spanish people. Without his work the British Battalion of the International Brigade could never have been created and sustained as it was. Time and time again he visited them in Spain, up in the high trenches at Jarama, amid the snow and ice of Teruel, crossing the wide and fast-flowing Ebro under fascist bombing, or seeking out the wounded in scores of hospitals scattered about Spain.

I remember two of these visits. The first was at the beginning of March, 1937, after the first two savage battles at Jarama when the newly-formed British Battalion had sustained such grievous losses in writing one of the most glorious epics

of courage and endurance in a long record of such actions. He spoke to the grimy and exhausted survivors in one of the most moving meetings I've ever attended. The effect was tremendous. The lads surged round him and carried him shoulder high through the little village to the singing of the International. Then he left them to travel round the hospitals at Chinchon, Murcia (where I think it was he first saw Jack Brent), Albacete, Valencia and elsewhere. The other occasion was a visit across the Ebro to the battalion holding the line near Corbera following its brilliant crossing two months earlier. In the hot sun the lads sat circled round among the olive trees and trampled vines. With Sam Wild, the Battalion Commander, and Bob Cooney, the Commissar at his side, he spoke frankly and openly of the difficulties facing the movement in Britain in overcoming the obstacles placed in the way of getting replacements and supplies to the battalion. He also told them what was being done, and in simple words asked them to continue their fight. Before he could finish, Sam had to break up the meeting in face of the approach of the Italian bombers, but I have no doubt his words and deeds helped inspire all there, many of whom were to die heroically only a few weeks later in the last grim fight to hold the front on the very day that the Negrin Government decided to withdraw the the International Volunteers from the line.

These experiences of his he embodied in his report to the 15th Congress of the Communist Party, when in Birmingham the home of the pro-fascist Prime Minister, Chamberlain, he contrasted the real Britain with that of Chamberlain which he said 'has betrayed our past as it will more cruelly and decisively betray us un-

less we defeat it. The real Britain is the Britain that has sent food, money and medical supplies to Spain and China. The real Britain is represented by the heroes in Spain, the immortal British Battalion. They carry forward the traditions of the past; they, and they alone, have redeemed the honour of the British people.'

The Spanish people were not defeated until the overwhelming force of the fascists, coupled with treachery and British Government intervention on Franco's side ended their heroic resistance in July, 1939. In a masterly analysis of the situation written in March, 1939, Harry Pollitt called for continued help for the Spanish people, declared they would continue the fight as they have done so valiantly, and appealed once again to the Labour Movement for a united struggle against Chamberlain. During this period there also occurred the betrayal of Czechoslovakia which he dealt with brilliantly in a pamphlet sold in 130,000 copies and reproduced in this volume.

One of the most outstanding and inspiring pieces of writing in this book is his 'Salute to the Soviet Union', written on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. In it he outlined the marvellous achievements of the Soviet people and said:

The darker the night in Europe, the more brilliantly the star of the Soviet Union shines. The Socialist Fatherland stands firmly on our side as the unconquerable ally of Peace, Democracy and Socialism. The ensuing months and years have borne out that statement. The last pamphlet quoted in this book and written in July, 1936, under the title 'Will It Be War?', comes back to the theme of the fight for peace in alliance with the Soviet Union. Here

he links the fight on foreign policy and peace with the defence of the Old Age Pensioners. 'The whole industrial, political and co-operative movement should join in the struggle for increased pensions, the workers' wages struggle, the fight for work, the claims of youth, and the aims of the colonial peoples.'

In commending this book to readers of *Labour Monthly*, I can do no better than end with what are almost the closing words of the volume:

Never, never will we bow the knee to fascism. . . . For our defence is strengthened by the memories of our past struggles. . . . Of those who, hundreds of years ago, saw the gleam of socialism and followed it in fair day and foul. We are the inheritors of their fighting traditions and sacrifices, defeats and victories. We will never besmirch their proud record. We will never let them down, or sully the flag of liberty they held so proudly aloft.

PETER KERRIGAN

A SOCIALIST PIONEER

William Thompson, by Richard K. P. Pankhurst. (228 pp. Watts & Co. 15s.)

THE British working-class movement is taking a long time to claim its own. The work of the so-called 'Ricardian Socialists' — men like Bray, Gray, Hodgskin, Thompson and Edmonds—has been praised by a hundred historians from Marx to Sidney Webb, yet the book now under review is the first full-length study of any one of them to be published in this country. It is therefore to be doubly welcomed—both for itself, and for the encouragement which it will give others to follow in Dr. Pankhurst's footsteps.

William Thompson (1775-1833) liked to describe himself as 'one of the idle classes': he was in fact a wealthy, landed proprietor with an estate in County Cork, who spent much of the last decade of his life in England working for the cause of co-operative socialism. 'The Co-operators', as Dr. Pankhurst reminds us, 'were active at the birth of British Socialism; they fashioned its basic doctrines and won its first converts'. What Thompson did, in effect, was to buttress Robert Owen's doctrines of co-operation with a critique of capitalism founded on certain aspects of Classical economic theory, and to appeal on this basis to the sympathies of the better-off sections of the working class.

Thompson's main works—notably *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth and Labour Rewarded*—together make up a massive indictment of capitalist society. Exploitation and inequality, Thompson proclaimed, were inherent in the system itself, and could not be abolished so long as the system remained. And he had no illusions about the role of the state, which he clearly visualised as a weapon of class rule. Society must be recast, by the action of the working people themselves. He and his fellow co-operators believed that the good society could be built by groups of enthusiasts who, as Dr. Pankhurst puts it, 'would contract out of existing society, with all its degradations and immoralities, and demonstrate the benefits of a rationally constructed social organisation'. They would set up little co-operative communities, which would grow and multiply until the new system embraced the whole world. The state would then wither away and wars would cease, since the vested interests which controlled

the state and profited by wars would no longer exist.

Thompson, then, was a 'utopian' socialist, but like the other 'Ricardian Socialists' he wore his utopianism with a difference. Engels, commenting on the way in which these men utilised certain Ricardian propositions 'for socialist conclusions', noted that they did so 'in part with such sharpness and decisiveness that this literature . . . remained unsurpassed until the appearance of *Capital*'. Dr. Pankhurst concludes his book with an interesting, although rather superficial, chapter on the relationship between Thompson and Marx. His statement of the resemblances between the two is a useful reminder of the fact that many characteristic Marxian doctrines, so far from being a foreign importation alien to the British working-class movement, were actually generalisations from the experience of that movement over a long period of years. But his statement of the differences between the two, although honest, is hardly adequate. It gives no real indication of the reason for Marx's claim that his own socialism was 'scientific' rather than 'utopian'; and there are one or two misstatements—e.g., that Marx postulated labour as the sole source of *wealth*, and that Marx did not examine the work of *any* of the 'Ricardian Socialists' in detail.

But these are minor defects. Dr. Pankhurst deserves the gratitude of the British labour movement for unearthing the details of the life of one of its greatest pioneers, and for expounding Thompson's views so effectively and impartially. This book was well worth waiting for, and is of special significance today when the good society for which Thompson worked is in process of construction—though not in the way

he envisaged—over a third of the world. John Minter Morgan was a good prophet (albeit a bad poet) when he wrote the following lines:

Neglected Thompson, whose
attainment towers
Beyond the reach of critics'
feebleness
And vain attempts his reasoning
to refute,
Has taught them wisdom—for
behold them mute.
But when this weaker generation's
past
And struggling truths, unfetter'd,
rise at last,
Then shall his work transcendent
be confess'd
And distant nations by his genius
bless'd. RONALD L. MEEK

NEW TEXTBOOK OF MARXISM

Dialectical Materialism, Volume II: Historical Materialism, by Maurice Cornforth. (206 pp. Lawrence & Wishart. 10s. 6d.).

THIS second volume of Maurice Cornforth's series on dialectical materialism, after a shorter introductory section on the general principles of the Marxist science of society, has two main sections of about equal length, one on the theory of social development and one on the transition from socialism to communism.

Naturally, in such a textbook the thesis cannot be original, but the author's treatment has such merits as to produce a work of outstanding value. Firstly, his gift for clear exposition makes a difficult subject seem simple. Secondly, he brings together all the basic statements of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to form a unified picture that includes the final conclusions drawn by Stalin in his *Economic Problems of Socialism*. Thirdly, the author enriches his theoretical exposition by

numerous illustrations from history and actual life, as for instance in his excellent account of the basis and the superstructure. The result is a volume which covers an immense amount of ground in a relatively small compass and yet remains eminently readable.

Under such conditions, with such a vast subject, there cannot fail to be fields or subjects which get little or no attention in this book. The most serious defect in this respect is the very small space allotted to the actual conditions of the present imperialist stage of capitalism and the Marxist Leninist theory of revolution. The word imperialism does not occur in the index and if it were not for a mention on page 65 and a paragraph on page 82 one gets the impression that the whole book might have been written fifty years ago (not counting the section on the transition from socialism to communism). The sub-chapter on the socialist revolution occupies hardly a couple of pages and contains little more than the generalisation that it put an end to all class exploitation. In contrast to this scant treatment the section on the future occupies over one-third of the whole book.

CLEMENS DUTT

SERVING THE PEOPLE

Through the Chinese Revolution, by R. and N. Lapwood (216 pp. Spalding and Levy, 10s. 6d.).

DR. and Mrs. Lapwood's book greatly expands our knowledge of the New China. Before the revolution they travelled widely, working first in the Chinese co-operatives and then teaching at Yenching University, Peking. Space, alas, forbidding expansion of their early years and life among the guerrillas, they plunge fully into the revolution and its effect upon the Chinese as seen

intimately from within. The chapter 'Education of Small Children' gains insight through the experience of their own small children.

Sight of Chinese poverty while teaching working boys in Shanghai convinced Dr. Lapwood that no expansion of his work, however great, could solve the basic problem of factory slums and wretched labourers. Village labour was in similar plight, 'The more we worked the more we realised that we could not touch the main problem'. . . . 'As we travelled we saw ever more clearly the sickness of China herself.' The rich idle, eating, drinking and gambling; the poor living in terrible hardship and near-starvation, creating by hard labour the wealth which others enjoyed. Mistakes and ruthlessness, inevitable in any revolution, must be seen in the perspective of the change brought to five hundred million people. This revolution, the greatest in human history has also been the most orderly; carried out with astonishing efficiency and humanity. A Chinese Christian back from Liverpool, disillusioned by English churches said: 'The opportunities for serving the people in the spirit of Jesus, which I am finding through the government under the leadership of the Communist Party are greater than I ever found in the Church. China gives me a programme of action and a method.' This sincere and inspiring book illuminates the upsurge of life in China today.

NOWELL JOHNSON

U.S. DILEMMA

The Last Illusion, by Hershel D. Meyer. (448 pp. Anvil-Atlas Press, New York, 3 dollars; Collet's, London, 21s.)

IN one of his many vivid sentences the author says America's present rulers 'are naturally terrorised at the

prospect of being museum pieces in a Socialist world.' This, he remarks, is what they really mean by such phrases as 'the chains of slavery' or 'the silence of the grave.' They see the fate of their kind approaching, and the vision presses them on to ever more dangerous gambling with the fate of the world. Mr. Meyer shows in some detail the springs of American capitalism's policy of conquest—its search everywhere for countries to which it can export its capital and from which it can take its super profits; its demand for the profits that can be extracted from arms production; its demand for cheap labour and raw materials, and above all its fear and hatred of Socialism. He points out that the people in all countries are compelled to choose between two conflicting bases of present-day international diplomacy: 1, that of the world peace camp which says the peaceful co-existence of the two systems is possible; and 2, that of U.S. monopoly capitalism which says that its vital interests require the forcible destruction of the Socialist part of the world. Capitalism, he shows, seeks war because it fears the outcome of competition with Socialism in a peaceful world. But the factors that can save the world from a capitalist atomic war are on the one hand the growing failure of America's rulers to achieve a unity of war aims among the capitalists of Western Europe; and on the other hand the growing strength of the world peace movement. He documents his arguments with an immense array of facts and quotations. The most effective of these naturally relate to the American scene itself, and anyone who seeks a vivid and valuable survey of U.S. capitalist ambitions and their impact on the world should read this book.

PHIL BOLSOVER

JACK BRENT

Good to be Alive: The Story of Jack Brent, by Stanley Harrison. (96 pp. Lawrence & Wishart, 5s.)

FOR many of us who knew Jack Brent, the way in which he triumphed over the great physical handicaps, the illness and pain which were the aftermath of a terrible wound received in the Spanish War, is an abiding inspiration. Even if he had possessed only the more 'passive' virtues of constant cheerfulness and courage in the face of very great odds, he would have been a remarkable man. But the fact that he worked so hard and achieved so much for the causes in which he believed—for the Spanish people, for communism, for the liberation of mankind—should be a shining example for all of us, sometimes a cause for healthy personal shame, and always an incentive to work harder and better. It is not easy to get such a man into a book. The result might have been marred by a sentimentality and a kind of 'canonisation' which Jack himself would have hated and which might have been embarrassing and even painful for many who knew him. Stanley Harrison, and those who have helped him by providing letters and personal recollections, have avoided this danger. Above all, there are the many extracts from Jack Brent's own letters.

This is a book that should be read by everyone—by those who knew Jack Brent and especially by those who never met him. It should be read as a part of our history of which we can be truly proud, and as a chronicle of some of those virtues without which it would not be possible to build socialism in Britain. Fortunately very few people are called upon to fight the kind of long and bitter battle which Jack fought so cheerfully and so well, but all of us can add something to our stature, something to our usefulness from the example of this 'bonny fechter' for the cause of all mankind.

R. MALCOLM

Shorter Notice

Architecture and Building Technique in the U.S.S.R. (24 pp., illustrated. Society for Cultural Relations with the U.S.S.R. 2s. 6d.).

BRIEF but comprehensive in its survey it covers design, technique, equipment, materials, organisation. It answers many questions including the vexed one about the number of bricks laid and standards of work. An appraisal of Soviet Architects and Architecture, it gives considerable credit to both. At the same time it is critical: British Architects were not impressed with facings used on some buildings.

J. MILDWATER

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO THEY MUST BE AWAKENED

The question of war is, or should be, in the forefront of all our immediate activities. Day by day the evidences of war preparations and war alliances are more and more coming out into the open. Never was there greater need of working-class activity, yet so far as this vital issue is concerned we must frankly face the fact that the workers are almost entirely indifferent. They must be awakened to the seriousness of the war danger.

From *Facing the War Makers*, by W. Gallacher, August, 1929.

Published by the Proprietors, The Trinity Trust, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3, and printed by Wembley News, Wembley, Middlesex, Great Britain. Registered for transmission by Magazine Post to Canada, including Newfoundland.

tells me he has found locally 'a firm band of men who have left-wing views. L.M. has played a considerable part in extending this spirit. I would like to see a Marxist discussion group formed in these parts, and I think this can only be done by getting more readers for our magazine'. That reminds me of a London railwayman who writes: 'Remember I was after a new man and was disappointed to find him a reader already? Well, I have found another, who saw me reading it in the rest room. Now he asks me to bring him a copy each month.'

In the Library

YET another railwayman, this time a Scot and active Labour Party member, describes a conversation with the local librarian about how widely read is the copy of L.M. He plans to check up too on the library in a neighbouring town. Library copies are very important because they reach so many readers. A Yorkshireman describes how he 'first came across it in the public library as a schoolboy in the twenties. Although I didn't quite grasp its meaning then, I felt that here was something different, something which challenged my understanding. So I stuck at it, off

and on, and good for me that I did'. A London teacher can't afford to buy all he needs to read, so he and a friend share different periodicals between them, and swop; while a Lancashire Labour Party reader shares his copy with three friends.

From all Quarters

OVERSEAS readers say: *Ceylon*: 'A very valuable guide to developing my political knowledge and understanding.' *New Zealand*: 'The most stimulating journal I read, and I take seven.' *Denmark*: 'Should simply hate the mere idea of missing R.P.D.'s monthly surveys.' *Chicago*: 'Jobless, but I can't do without its clarity, inspiration and ever pungent Notes.' *Middle East*: 'The political periodical we find most valuable.' *California*: 'Far and away the finest Marxist monthly in the English language.' *Australia*: 'Nothing so good out here.'

Note for Notes

AMONG the donations reaching us during June was a ten shilling Note and with it these verses: *For Notes of the Month, Worth very much more, This little offering I add to your store.* Many thanks, New Southgate reader!

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